NOTES TO CHAPTER XII.

1. THAT General McClellan was to blame for not having undertaken a movement in force on Manassas before the winter set in, has been often maintained.
The great disparity in force between his army and that of General Johnston has been a favorite weapon in the hands of McClellan's critics. But while every one must admit that McClellan's secret-service department brought him most untrustworthy information, and while we may fairly say that he ought to have known better than to have accepted without hesitation such monstrously exaggerated stories of the strength of his adversaries, a just criticism of McClellan's conduct, as distinguished from a criticism on his lack of sagacity, must proceed on the assumption of the truth of these estimates, because McClellan's course was based on this assumption.
McClellan may have been, and we think he was, foolish in believing these estimates to be true, but he would have been yet more foolish, not to say culpable, if, believing them, he had not given to them their full weight in any plan which he

was devising. A criticism of McClellan's conduct, therefore, on the basis of the actual size of Johnston's army is beside* the mark, for it is admitted, even by the critics, that